

## ANALYSIS OF THE MANAGEMENT AT THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN ROMANIA

### **Abstract**

The transition dynamic, the status of the Member State of the European Union, as well as the current global economic crisis context, determined new challenges for the Romanian public administration.

The article presents an analysis of the management practiced in Romania in 2010, compared with 2009. This analysis is based on the interpretation of a questionnaire' results, collected from 147 civil servants from central and local public administration from Romania.

Based on the analysis, there were identified seven main aspects that require a special attention for improvement of the management in the public administration. These aspects were selected not only due to their importance, but also due to the fact that the improvement of the management in these domains could assure the platform for continuation, speeding up, and sustainability of the reform process, as a whole.

**Keywords:** local public administration, analysis, management.

**JEL CODES:** H11.

## ANALIZA MANAGEMENTULUI LA NIVELUL ADMINISTRAȚIEI PUBLICE DIN ROMÂNIA

**Marius Constantin PROFIROIU**

Professor Ph.D., Administration and Public Management Faculty, Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies

E-mail: profiroiu@gmail.com

### **Rezumat**

Dinamica tranziției, statutul de Stat Membru al Uniunii Europene, dar și actualul context de criză economică globală, au însemnat noi provocări pentru administrația publică din România.

Articolul prezintă o analiză a situației managementului practicat în România în 2010, comparativ cu anul 2009. Această analiză se bazează pe prelucrarea rezultatelor unui chestionar la care au răspuns 147 funcționari publici din cadrul administrației publice centrale și locale din România.

Pe baza analizelor efectuate, au fost identificate șapte aspecte principale care necesită o atenție deosebită, în vederea îmbunătățirii managementului în administrația publică. Aceste aspecte au fost selectate nu numai datorită importanței în sine, ci și datorită faptului că îmbunătățirea managementului în aceste domenii ar putea asigura platforma pentru dinamizarea, sustenabilitatea și continuitatea procesului de reformă, în ansamblu.

**Cuvinte cheie:** administrație publică locală, analiză, management.



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## 1. GENERAL CONTEXT

The existence of an efficient and democratic administration is one of the most important criteria that define a country's modernity (Profiroi et al., 2006). Therefore, a major priority for Romania is to achieve, in a few years, a real reform through which the government of our country to be at the European standards and to be characterized by transparency, accountability, adaptability and effectiveness. The development of management in the public sector, worldwide, is a response to the crisis of legitimacy of the governments, in its traditional way of operation. Management of public administration presents, compared with management in the economic field, numerous conceptual and practical elements of specificity, to be known and taken into account.

The transition to a democratic market economy led to a series of expectations and new requirements for the governments, which they failed to satisfy. Administration needs time to adapt for meeting the new demands of citizens. Establishing the principle of "better service to the public" is not enough to ensure that public institutions will use to support the development of a strong corporate culture and ethics. The solution consists of an institutional shift that requires strategic planning and can not be obtained quickly and easily.

Any organization is defined, more or less specifically, by a border that allows us to distinguish what is inside compared to outside. Administration seems like a huge and complex mass, so it is difficult to recognize precisely the parties. One major reason for which the administration seems to escape the logic of organization is represented by the difficulty in identifying subsystems that are run autonomously. Administration is made up of a complex set of functions, objectives, hierarchy, rules and traditions. By outsiders, it can be seen as an impenetrable body, and by those who are part of it as a roller gear and practice, in which each knows only one side.

The literature offers several definitions and from which we are exploring some of these to highlight the variety of opinions and approaches the current public administration today. There are at least two components of this definition, namely "public management" and "reform" (Politt & Bouckaert, 2000; Metcalfe, 1990). We will review the components related to public management. According to Professor Romain Laufer public management can be defined as two other forms: In the strict sense: public management is a way of language management application (system analysis) in the public sector defined in the legal sense; broadly: public management is approached as a management applicable when the the organization becomes very large relative to its external environment (Laufer, 1980).

We consider that the term "public management" can be used in at least three basic ways: the activity carried on civil servants and politicians, executive power structures and processes, systematic study or activities, or of structures and processes. In the case of administration, where the operation is based on a written document (official form), we see that more and more the environment in which they operate has become turbulent and management structures are most appropriate for its management. According to Bartoli, application management in public administration is determined without doubt the existence of a crisis of legitimacy of it (Bartoli, 1992). When legal norm ceases to encode an administrative act unequivocal manner, there is a need to substitute it with another one.

Public management is a regulatory approach, rationality being its basic principle and pragmatism, strength. Implementation of management procedures in which one of the objectives is to minimize grievances, allows filling the space left free by the administrative and legal language with a classical coherent logic of relations, information and behaviors that they found ways for normativity in rationality application, and as climate created.

When analysing all these models we can see some common ground - an aspiration for efficiency, increase quality, openness to citizens, decentralization. But each model has distinct features and different methods to obtain these results. We must keep in mind that the new public management is not uniformly applied current after a clear standard in all Western countries. Each government party has chosen a specific approach in which the political system operates and the light of various historical factors, administrative, economic and social. What should be noted is the extent of this process which included virtually all Western states and has influenced and influences essentially all major programs of reform of public administration including in our country today.

Transition dynamics, as well as the difficulties to overcome for EU accession, meant new challenges for the Romanian government and society, involving complex public policy development. There has been progress in creating an economic system that combines on the one hand, efficiency and sustainability, and on the other, social equity and governance based on pluralistic democracy and decentralized, though still remain some challenges such as poverty, regional differences etc.

Government policies must meet the environment found in a constantly changing and to design policies, tactics, and optimal strategies. All these issues require a new vision, alternative methods to ensure continuous improvement of the use of scarce resources to achieve maximum impact and benefits.

## 2. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MANAGEMENT (THE YEAR 2010, COMPARED WITH 2009)

The analysis was based on a survey, which had a total of 147 respondents from central and local public administration (Nicolescu, et al, 2011). A total of 99 respondents (71% from total) held a managerial position, of which 50% of managerial experience up to five years, 26% with managerial experience of 6-10 years, 18% with managerial experience of 11-20 years and 6% over 20 years managerial experience. In carrying out comparative analysis of management situation in Romania was considered primarily assessment of the level of management practiced in Romania in 2010 compared with 2009, on several levels, namely: the institution where the respondent works, in the sector where respondent works and, also, at the country level.

At the institutional level, the management is considered to be about the same, by half of respondents. Percentage of those that considered that management is superior and those who considered that the management is lower was similar, representing one quarter of respondents for each category. Instead, the assessment at the country level is quite different: 59% of respondents consider that management is lower in 2010 compared to 2009, while only 6% consider that it is higher, about a third of respondents consider that management is about the same (see figures below).

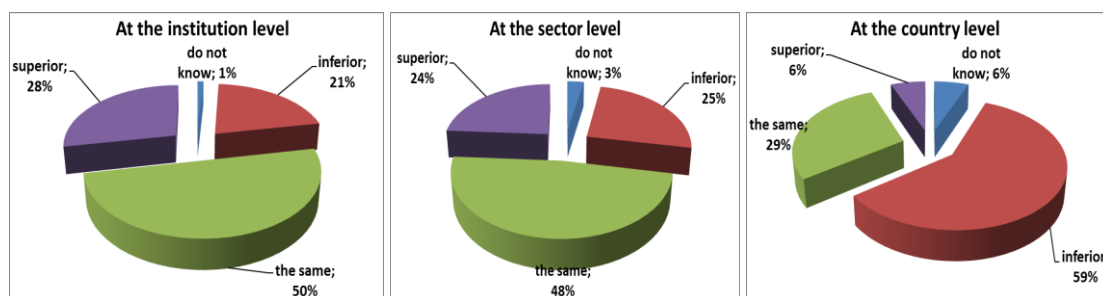


FIGURE 1 - COMPARATIVE MANAGEMENT: AT INSTITUTION, ACTIVITY SECTOR, AND COUNTRY LEVEL

The survey aimed at assessing and analyzing the quality and effectiveness of management practiced in the public administration from Romania in 2010, compared with management at EU level, and also with the management in some countries from Central Europe (Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia). Most respondents (82%) appreciate inferior quality and effectiveness of practice management administration in Romania in 2010 compared with management at EU level, however that only 5% consider its superiority.

In the comparative analysis of the management practiced in the public administration from Romania, in 2010, compared with the countries from Central Europe (Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia), more than half of respondents (57%) consider it as inferior; only few respondents (6%) consider as being superior (see the figures below).

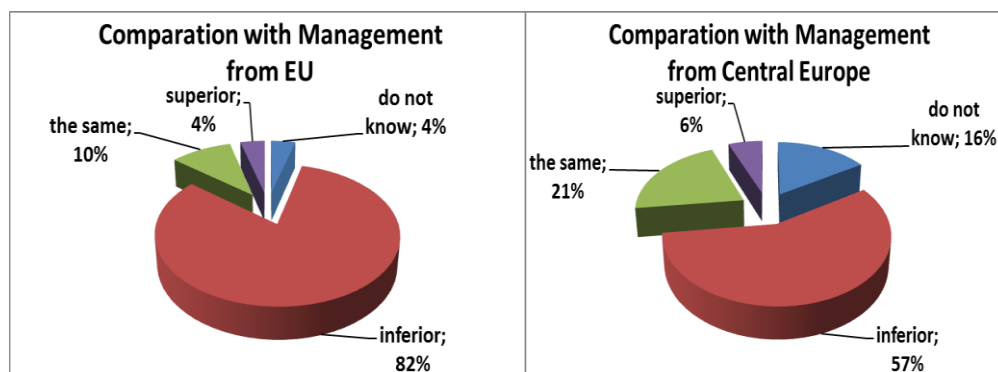


FIGURE 2 - COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MANAGEMENT PRACTICED IN ROMANIA, IN 2010

In terms of management capacity to cope with economic crisis manifested in 2010 in Romania, the assessment is different from the levels analyzed. Thus, 71% of respondents considered that there is a low capacity, generally, at the country level.

TABLE 1 - MANAGEMENT CAPACITY TO COPE WITH THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

	high	medium	reduced	do not know
Generally, at country level	1%	26%	71%	2%
At SME level	3%	38%	44%	14%
At large companies level	12%	52%	24%	13%
At multinational level	24%	48%	10%	17%
At central public administration level	1%	24%	72%	3%
At local public administration level	4%	40%	56%	0%

As presented in the above table, at the level of the large companies and multinationals it is appreciated a middle or high capacity to cope with economic crisis. Instead, at the level of the SMEs, 44% considered that their level is low capacity and 38% considered that there is an average capacity and only 3% considered that there is a high capacity to cope with economic crisis. Therefore, compared with the public sector, both local and central, the management in the private sector has an increased capacity to deal with economic crisis.

### 3. ANALYSIS OF WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS OF THE MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The comparison of the top ten strengths of local and central public administration (see table below) indicate many similarities. Thus, eight strengths of both administrations are included in the list. The first position for the main strength is totally different: for the central public administration is 'the development of a performant informatics system' while for local public administration is 'the efficient organization of the activities'. Differentiation of the 10 strengths list is at the level of five criteria. At the central public administration differentiation is on 'Intense managerial know-how from other countries' (position 5) and

on 'Projection and implementation of functional and efficient management systems' (position 8). At the local public administration differentiation is on 'Efficient organization of the activities'(position 1), on 'Intense involvement of the employers within the organization' (position 3) and on 'Working style of the managers, focused on involvement and efficacy'(position 7). The frequency indice of the ten strengths is sensible higher at the management of local public administration, compared with central administration. This indicates an increased trust in the capacity of the management within the local public administration.

TABLE 2 - COMPARATIVE SITUATION OF THE TEN STRENGTHS OF THE MANAGEMENT IN CENTRAL AND LOCAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

No. crt.	Criteria	Central Public Administration		Local Public Administration	
		Position	Frequency	Position	Frequency
1	Development of a performant informatics system	1	39%	5	36%
2	Elaboration of well fundamented strategies and policies	2	38%	6	34%
3	Valorizing of the informational and decisional potential of the information	3	38%	9	28%
4	Coordination of the decisions, actions and behaviors of the personnel involved	4	31%	2	41%
5	Intense managerial know-how from other countries	5	29%	-	-
6	Intense training activities of the personnel	6	28%	10	28%
7	Rigorous control-evaluation of the activities and performances	7	27%	-	-
8	Projection and implementation of functional and efficient management systems	8	27%	-	-
9	Assuring the organization' sustainability	9	26%	8	29%
10	Focusing on obtaining performance	10	24%	4	39%
11	Efficient organization of the activities	-	-	1	54%
12	Intense involvement of the employers within the organization	-	-	3	41%
13	Working style of the managers, focused on involvement and efficacy	-	-	7	30%

The comparative situation of the ten weaknesses of the local and central public administration indicates also similarities. Therefore, 8 weaknesses are in the list of both administrations. The first three positions of weaknesses, having a slight different array, are the following criteria: 'Less focus on priorities', 'Inadequate or inexistent strategies and policies' and 'Low capacity to motivate the staff within the organization'.

Diferentiation of the list of 10 weaknesses is at the level of following criteria: at the local public administration level on the criteria 'Sporadically and inefficient control-evaluation' (position 7) and 'Insufficient managerial use of the modern informatics value' and at central administration level on

'(position 10) and at the central public administration level on criteria on 'Insufficient economic fundamenting of the decisions' (position 5) and on 'Low economic performances' (position 7).

The frequency indice regarding the management ten weaknesses is sensible higher at the central administration, compared with the local public administration. This indicates a weaker management in the central administration, compared with the local public administration, with intense negative influences on how management operates and on management performances on the whole public administration in Romania, and also on the management, in general, at the country level.

TABLE 3. COMPARATIVE SITUATION OF THE TEN WEAKNESSES OF THE MANAGEMENT IN CENTRAL AND LOCAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

No. crt.	Criteria	Central Public Administration		Local Public Administration	
		Position	Frequency	Position	Frequency
1	Less focus on priorities	1	56%	2	51%
2	Inadequate or inexistent strategies and policies	2	54%	3	46%
3	Low capacity to motivate the staff within the organization	3	49%	1	64%
4	Late and inefficient reactions to the opportunities and threats from the socio-economic environment	4	48%	9	30%
5	Insufficient economic fundamenting of the decisions	5	45%	-	-
6	Inappropriate organization of the activities	6	41%	5	35%
7	Low economic performances	7	41%	-	-
8	Use of managerial systems that are empirical, not professionally designed	8	36%	6	33%
9	Inefficient coordination of the personnel	9	35%	4	37%
10	Insufficient preoccupation to superior use knowledge and human resources	10	34%	8	31%
11	Sporadically and inefficient control-evaluation	-	-	7	32%
12	Insufficient managerial use of the modern informatics value	-	-	10	30%

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on analysis performed there were identified seven main issues that need attention for improving the management in the public administration. These issues were selected not only because of their importance in itself but also because improving management in these areas could provide a platform for expediting, continuity and sustainability of the reform process, as a whole.

- a) Development mechanism of the critical analysis at public administration level. Critical analysis the learning process after obtaining the results and impact of service delivery aimed at promoting change and improvement in administration and management - is the engine of



change and improvement. The process of analysis should be based on an ascending flow of information from services provided to the senior management.

The results of critical analysis will serve as the basis for the proposals for improving management. In essence, the reform involves a transformation, not technical, but a culture of change in administration, which requires transformations in behaviors, attitudes and relationships. Misunderstanding or denial of the importance of this change is equivalent to lack of motivation for public administration reform.

- b) Strengthening inter-institutional cooperation mechanisms. Another important dimension of a coherent administration refers to the identification of horizontal relations in the institutional perspective, which requires the creation of strong horizontal links between organizations, capable of generating flows of information. This is particularly important in determining policy objectives and strategies of public services. The full understanding of multiple economic and social problems, as a basis for formulating and evaluating public policies, can not be achieved without adopting a comprehensive perspective.
- c) Ensure the legislative framework. An important dimension of public administration management aims character of decisions and regulations, which in most of the cases is much high and excessive detailed. The consequence is impairing flexibility and modernization of the public administration. For example, structures, functions and positions in a ministry depend by the existing laws and government decisions. Because at this level are frequent changes difficult to operate, any specification or procedures related to the structure will narrow the opportunity to make any changes, resulting in stiffness. Analysis of the procedures of drafting the current law and regulations will require long-term improvement of legal framework.
- d) Optimizing use of resources by strengthening the control and audit functions. Control and audit function focuses on the procedures which are respected during the implementation of the activities (which are not subject to critical analysis), instead of comparing results with objectives. Reform at this level, and also in the legislative field, takes the form of a long-term process and must be based on critical analysis of the purpose and, implicitly, on the methods of control and audit functions.
- e) Administrative simplification in public administration. The general application of information technologies in public administration could support this objective. Over-formalization and inflexibility of regulations can lead to a level of complexity that only lawyers could understand. Such a legal framework, which can not be fully implemented and respected, lead to a low level of integrity, promoting the emergence of disputes, and causing a legislative paralysis.



- f) Professionalization and motivate human resources in public administration. The status and professional of management function and of the human resources development requires substantial improvements. The general orientation should aim to improving of services for the public. Factors that increase the significance of status and have a real positive impact on the lives of others within the meaning of appreciation and respect from the public, may be equivalent to material rewards in the professional satisfaction, and can increase the quality of work in the public and even compensate for low wages. There is a significant correlation between motivation for training and selection processes, evaluation and promotion in civil service. If these processes are perceived as fair and transparent, and promotion is based on merit, then the training has an important role. Modern management of human resources should be based on concepts such as training needs analysis, personal development, career planning, concepts that are still absent in the Romanian public administration.
- g) Development of managerial culture in public administration. To the development of a professional civil service management skills should be added a better definition and assignment of management responsibilities and accountability. Emphasizing individual responsibility and therefore accountability will occur gradually through appropriate training, development and professional standards for performance evaluation. Regaining confidence among all categories of civil servants in public administration and the introduction of a systematic mechanism to overcome this problem will stimulate the responsibility and accountability within the civil service.

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